

WHY THE HEAVENLY ROBES ARE WHITE

NO. 1316

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 24, 1876,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed
their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"*
Revelation 7:14.

OUR curiosity inquires into the condition of those who have newly entered heaven; like fresh stars they have lit up the celestial firmament with an added splendor; new voices are heard in the choir of the redeemed. In what condition are they at the moment of their admission to the heavenly seats? Their bodies are left behind, we know, to decay back to mother earth, but how fare their unclothed immortal spirits? What now occupies those pure and perfect minds? We are not left in the dark upon this matter—our Lord Jesus Christ has brought immortality and life to light—and in the words of our text, and the preceding and following verses we are informed as to these new comers, these recruits for the church triumphant! Were our text properly translated it would run thus—"These are they that come out of great tribulation," or who "are coming"—in the present tense. If the word does not distinctly refer to those who have "just come," it certainly includes such. Those who "come" are those who *have* come, and those who *shall* come, but it must also include those who are, at this moment, *arriving*! These are those whom I venture to call heaven's new-born princes, her fresh blooming flowers whose beauty, for the first time, is seen in Paradise! Lo, I see the newly departed passing through the river of death, ascending the other shore, and entering in through the gates into the City. What are these new comers doing? We find that they are not kept waiting outside, nor put through a quarantine, nor cast into *purgatorial* fires—but as they arrive from great tribulation they are at once *admitted to holy fellowship*! Therefore are they before the throne of God—dwelling in the courts of the great King—to go no more out forever. Earthly courtiers only stand at times in their monarch's presence, but these abide forevermore before the throne of God, and of the Lamb, favored to behold the face of God without a veil between, and to see the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off. How quickly has earth faded from their minds, and heaven's glory flashed upon them! The sick bed and the weeping friends are gone; the throne of their God and Savior fills the whole field of their delighted vision!

They are *arrayed for holy service*, and arrayed at once, for they wear white robes fitted for their priestly service. It is true they have no material bodies, but in some mystic sense which is applicable to the spirit world, these holy ones wear a vesture which qualifies them for celestial worship, and all the holy service of the heavenly state.

They are not only admitted to see God, and prepared to engage in His most glorious worship, but they are, at once, *permitted actually to commence their holy lifework* by serving God day and night in His temple. We find them already engaged in actual adoration, for they cried with a loud voice, saying, "salvation to our God which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." These pure spirits yet have voices which our God, who is a Spirit, hears and approves! Their song is full of purest gospel truth, and their earnestness is shown by the loudness of their voices; they need no angels to instruct them in the manners and customs of the upper world, for even while they sojourned on earth their conversation was in heaven, and they are at home at once! They are not waiting till they have learned the song—but they know it already—for grace is the rehearsal of glory! They do not need to be initiated into the sacred mysteries, for they have had access within the veil while here below; they will begin their heavenly life at once, take up the tune just where they find it, and join in the hymn just as soon as they arrive! They begin at once to praise Him that sits upon the throne, and to adore the Lamb! How sweet it is to think of those who have lately left us, that though they broke off this mortal life, as it were, before it was complete, and left it a fragment, yet they do not begin life up yonder prematurely or abruptly, but exactly at the right

time! The new singer takes his place in the choir just when his part is coming on, and takes up the keynote as if he had been there a century! He begins his song with his white robe on and his palm branch in his hand, as one who is well prepared to take his part in the endless adoration. Sudden glory does not startle the inhabitants of heaven as sudden death startles the dwellers upon earth; the immigrants to heaven are expected, and the gates stand always open to welcome them! There are no untimely births into the church of the first-born—each one comes in his season.

As to the state and condition of the newly glorified, they are described to us still further in the verses which follow the text. It seems to me that those pure spirits who are without their bodies as yet are pictured as being like the children of Israel when the great camp was pitched in the wilderness; in the desert the Lord God would have dwelt among them, had it not been for their sins. In heaven He *does* dwell in the most supreme sense: “He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.” Over the heads of the great camp in the wilderness there hung a cloud of glory which, in the daytime, sheltered them from the great heat of the sun, and at night lit up the whole camp so that all the streets of that canvas city were brilliant through the whole night. That bright light indicated the presence of God—He did, as it were, hover over them, and cover them with His wing, but in heaven He shall be still nearer, and *dwell* among them! His presence shall sanctify, enlighten, and overshadow all. The Shekinah, the holy and mystic light which indicated the presence of God in the tabernacle, was veiled from the sight of the multitude—but in heaven all shall behold the glory of the Lord, and be surrounded with it. The saints above enjoy a conscious nearness and fellowship with the Lord, such as we cannot hope to rival on this side of Jordan; He shall dwell among them! Happy spirits who have this felicity to have God indwelling them, abiding with them, and surrounding them forever! Hence it is that they hunger no more, for as Israel fed upon the manna, so they feast on divine love. They thirst no more, for as Israel drank of the rock, so are the glorified ones with Christ, and drink forever of His love. “The sun shall not light on them nor any heat.” How can it, when they are utterly withdrawn from the influence of materialism, and screened from all evil influences of every kind by the matchless presence of the mighty God who, of old, was vanguard and rear-guard to His people, and forever is their all-in-all? With the Lamb for their Leader, what choice company they keep! What hallowed paths they tread! What sacred communications they receive! What amazing raptures they feel! With the Lamb to lead them to fountains of waters undiscovered by their feet aforetime, what fresh joy shall burst in upon them! With God Himself to be their Comforter, how all regrets at having left beloved ones down below shall be driven away completely! And how completely shall their whole souls be filled with perfect bliss without a single briny tear to mar the joy!

In the vision before us, the most striking point about the newly arrived, according to the speech of the Elder and the remark of John, was their *wearing white robes*. The venerable elder does not appear to have taken notice of much else except this, for he asks the question, “Who are these that are arrayed in white robes, and from where came they?” That was the point to which he would direct John’s thoughts—who can they be that shine so brightly there before the eternal throne? From where have they come in such attire? So this morning we will consider first, *what did their white robes indicate?* Secondly, *how did they come by them?* And lastly, *what is the lesson of the text to us?*

I. WHAT DID THESE WHITE ROBES MEAN? Why were they *white* robes? Of course it is all symbolism—these spirits wore no garments because they had no bodies—but their robes signify their character, office, history, and condition.

The white robes show, first, *the immaculate purity of their character*. “They are without fault before the throne of God.” Into the heavenly place no sin could possibly enter, and they have brought no sin with them; no, not so much as a trace, or relic, or scar of a sin! They are “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,” presented holy, without blame, and faultless in the sight of the Most High! White signifies *perfection*. It is not so much a color as the harmonious union and blending of all the hues, colors, and beauties of light. In the characters of just men made perfect we have the combination of all virtues, the balancing of all excellences, a display of all the beauties of divine grace; are they not like their Lord, and is He not all beauties in one? Down here a saint has an evident excess of the red of courage, or the blue of constancy, or the violet of tenderness—we have to admire the varied excellences, and lament the multifarious defects of the children of God, but up yonder each saint shall combine in his character all things which are lovely and of good repute; his garments shall be always white to indicate completeness, as

well as spotlessness of character. We ought to note that the white here meant is bright and shining, to indicate that their characters shall be lustrous and attractive. They shall be the admiration of principalities and powers as they see in them the manifold wisdom of God. In these white garments they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Our Lord's garments in the transfiguration are not only said to have been "whiter than any fuller could make them," but they are said to have been glistering and "white as the light." The redeemed before the truth of God shine like stars before the eyes of all who are favored to gaze upon their assembly! What a glory there will be about the character of a child of God! Even those who have seen it long shall still be filled with wonder at what grace has done! God, Himself, shall take delight in His people when He has made them "white in the blood of the Lamb." That the white robes must refer to their own character is clear; I have taken it for granted that it is so because the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is the righteousness of the saints, cannot possibly be meant here, since that cannot be either defiled or washed. To speak of washing the righteousness of Christ in the blood of Christ would not only be an erroneous idea, but it would involve a conglomeration of metaphors not to be tolerated for a moment! The white robes here intended are the *personal characters* of the saints as they appear before God Himself. They are washed in the blood of the Lamb, and so cleansed that they are absolutely perfect.

By "white robes," we also understand *the fitness of their souls for the service to which they are appointed*. They were chosen before all worlds to be kings and priests unto God—but a priest might not stand before the Lord to minister until he had put on his appointed linen garments; therefore the souls which have been taken up to heaven are represented in white robes to show that they are completely fitted for that divine service to which they were ordained of old—to which the Spirit of God called them while they were here, and in which Jesus Christ leads the way, being a priest forever, at their head. They are able to offer acceptably the incense of praise, for they are girded with the garments of their office. We know not all the occupations of the blessed, but we know that they are all such as can be performed by a royal priesthood, and therefore the priestly garb betokens that they are ready to do the will of God in all things, and to perpetually offer the sacrifice of praise unto the Lord.

"White robes" also signify *victory*. I should think that in almost every nation, white has indicated the joy of triumph. Often when generals have returned from battle, they and the warriors have been clothed in white, or have ridden upon white horses. True, the Romans adopted purple as their imperial color, and well they might, for their victories and their rule were alike bloody and cruel! But the Christ of God sets forth His gentle and holy victories by white—it is on a "white cloud" that He shall come to judge the world, and His seat of judgment shall be "the great white throne." Upon a "white horse" He shall ride, and all the armies of heaven shall follow Him on white horses. Lo, He is clothed with a "white" garment down to His feet! Thus has He chosen white as the symbolic color of His victorious kingdom, and so the redeemed wear it, even the newly born, freshly escaped out of great tribulation, because they are all of them, more than conquerors! They wear the victor's garb, and bear the palm which is the victor's symbol.

White is also the color of *rest*. If a man desired to do a day's work in this poor grimy world, a snow-white garment would hardly suit him, for it would soon be stained and soiled. Therefore the garments of toil are generally of another color, more fitted for a dusty world. The day of rest, the day of Sabbath joy and pleasure is fittingly denoted by white garments. Well may the redeemed be thus arrayed, for they have finally put off the garments of toil, and the armor of battle; they rest from their labors in the Rest of God.

Chiefly, white is the color of *joy*. Almost all nations have adopted it as most suitable for bridal array, and therefore these happy spirits have put on their bridal robes, and are ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb. Though they are waiting for the resurrection, yet are they waiting with their bridal garments on, waiting and rejoicing, waiting and chanting their Redeemer's praises, for they feast with Him till He shall descend to consummate their bliss by bringing their bodies from the grave to share with them in the eternal joy!

So, you see, the white garments have a great deal of teaching about them, and if it were the objective of my discourse to bring it out, I could well spend a full hour in describing what is meant. But I am rather driving at something else, and to that I invite you. May the Holy Spirit lead us into it!

II. Secondly, HOW DID THEY COME BY THOSE WHITE GARMENTS? How came they to be so white? It was the whiteness which struck the mind of the elder, and of the apostle. What could be the cause of it? "From where did they come?" he asked.

Those characters were not so pure, or in other words, those garments were not so white by *nature*. They are washed, you see, and therefore they must once have been *stained*. They have "washed their robes." They were not always white. No, original sin has stained the character of all the sons of Adam! There is about us from the very beginning, an abundance of leprous spots; the garment is not white when first we put it on; how shall he be clean that is born of woman? Then, alas, there are by nature upon the robe, the stains of *actual* sin which we committed before conversion. We altogether tremble at the remembrance of it, and we would utterly despair if we did not know that it has been washed away in the blood of the Lamb! Then, alas, there are the iniquities we have committed since we have known the Lord; under some aspects these are the most baneful, and the most sinful of all our transgressions, for we have transgressed against eternal love, since we have known it, and rebelled against an electing, redeeming, forgiving God. Ah, this is sin indeed! Among the hosts above there is not one robe but what needed to be washed. They all required it, for by nature they were all stained by sin in many ways. Do not think of one saint who has gone to his reward above, as being in any way different in nature from you! They were all of like passions with us; ones who had within them the same tendencies to sin. If we suppose them to have been naturally better, they will not yield us so much stimulus, for then we shall ascribe their victory to the goodness of their nature, and shall despair for ourselves! But if we remember that they were just as fallen, and just as tainted with inbred sin as we are, we shall then rejoice and take courage, for if they have entered heaven with unspotted garments, having washed them, why should not we be also washed, and be white as they?

But it might be suggested that perhaps they came to their rest by a cleaner way than that which now lies before us. Possibly there was something about their course of life, their surroundings, the condition of the age in which they lived which helped them to keep their garments white. No, my brothers and sisters, it was not so! They passed along the road of tribulation, and that tribulation was not of a less trying kind than ours, but was severe enough to be called "great tribulation." So they followed the same pathway as we do—

*"Once they were mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears.
They wrestled hard as we do now,
With sins and doubts, and fears."*

Their road was just as miry as ours, and perhaps even more so. They came through every slough staining their garments even as we do, and sorrowing because of it even as we do! They went where we go, even to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, and they washed their garments white. How this ought to assist us to feel that although our pathway is one in which we meet with innumerable temptations, yet inasmuch as all the glorified have come up white and clean from it, by virtue of the atoning blood, even so shall we!

But I want to conduct you a little further into the central meaning of the text. Brothers and sisters, their garments came to be white *through a miracle of divine grace*. Through nothing less than a miracle of grace because they came through *the* great tribulation, where everything tended to defile them. The word, "*the*" ought to have been in the translation; it is marvelous how the translators came to leave it out! The text should read, "These are they which come out of *the* great tribulation." Note, also, that the half Latin word, "tribulation," upon which so many dwell as signifying *threshing*, is not in the Greek, but is merely a translator's word, and therefore not to be insisted on. The original simply signifies *oppression* and *affliction* of any sort. Now, all the children of God have had to go through *the* great oppression, and to endure its ills. What am I driving at? I will show you. I do not think that the text refers to some *one* great persecution, but to the great conflict of the ages in which the seed of the serpent perpetually molests and oppresses the seed of the woman. The strife began at the gates of Eden when the Lord said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed: He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." Satan takes care to nibble at the heel, though his own head has been broken by our great Lord. There is a hereditary conflict, a great tribulation, always to

be suffered by the saints below, for he that is born after the flesh persecutes him that is born after the Spirit. The enmity takes all sorts of shapes, but from the beginning, even until now, it is in the *world*. Now, the white-robed ones had come out of that continuous and general conflict uninjured—like the three holy children who came out of the furnace with not so much as the smell of fire upon them. Some of them had been slandered; men of the world had thrown handfuls of the foulest mud upon them; but they washed their robes and made them white. Others of them had come out of remarkable temptations from men and devils. Satan himself had poured his blasphemies into their ears so that they verily thought they would, themselves, blaspheme! They were tried by the most defiling of temptations, but they overcame through the blood of the Lamb, and were delivered from every polluting trace of the temptation by the efficacy of the atoning sacrifice! Some of them were cruelly persecuted and trodden down as mire in the streets—and yet they rose to glory white as snow! They went through fire, through water, and wandered without a certain dwelling place; they were made to be as the offscouring of all things, but they came uninjured and unspotted out of it all! I would have you look upon the text as an exclamation of surprise uttered by the elder to John as they both mentally looked down upon the great struggle going on in the world below, where temptations and trials of all sorts surround the chosen company of the church militant. They watched the warring band, and marked that a goodly host of men, though they fought in the thick of the battle and were covered with dust, and had their garments rolled in blood, yet instead of perishing on the battlefield, as they seemed to do, came up out of it—came up wearing spotless and shining garments! Here was the wonder of it that they were white after such a trial! I have heard this text used as if the great tribulation had assisted in purifying them, whereas it was that which would have in itself *defiled* them! It was that which by their own natural operation tended to make them foul! The marvel was that they came out of it and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!

Now let me conduct you into the thought which we have at this moment laid before you, namely, that it was by the operation of the *blood of Christ*, and by nothing else that the glorified saints were made clean! They came out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! Tribulation, or affliction, or oppression—call it what you will—is overruled by a miracle of divine grace so as to benefit the believer. But in and of itself, the great tribulation is not the cleanser, but the *defiler* of the soul! Affliction of itself does not sanctify anybody, but the reverse. I believe in sanctified afflictions, but not in sanctifying afflictions! Afflictions of themselves awake the evil which is in us to an unknown energy, and place us in positions where the rebellious heart is tempted to forsake the Lord; this will be seen if we consider the matter closely. The great tribulation of which I have to speak is, under some aspects a sin-creating thing, and if the victorious ones had not perpetually gone to the blood of Christ, they would never have had their garments white—it was the blood, alone, which made and kept them white. They were familiar with the atonement, and knew its cleansing power.

Brothers and sisters, *some of the trials of the saints are evidently intended, by those who are the instruments of them, to make them sin*. Satan and wicked men assail the saints with this as their end and aim. Satan, for instance, when he tried Job, did it with the distinct intention of causing him to curse God to His face. He did not at all hide his intent, even before the throne of God, but boldly avowed it, and said, “Put forth, now, Your hand, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse You to Your face.” The Lord had other designs, but the objective of the affliction, as far as Satan was concerned, was to remove Job from his integrity, and cause him to blaspheme. Satan is very wise, and he knows if we do not, that affliction is an admirable instrument for his purpose, and so much tends to make a man sin, that if he does not fly to the blood of Jesus to counteract the tendency of the tribulation, he will speedily fall. What would Job have done had he not known that his Redeemer lived? As it is with the prince of tempters, so is it with those who serve him—they vex the saints in order to make them sin! When ungodly men persecute the children of God, whether it is by scoffing at them or by injuring them in their estates or persons, their direct objective is to make them renounce their religion, and forsake Christ! Or if this cannot be done, they aim at making them dishonor their profession by sin. Has not this been the real objective of all persecution, from the days of the chief priests and Pharisees, even until now? If they can make the saints sin, their end is gained; so that that part of the great tribulation which comes from Satan and the world is directly designed to make us sin against the Lord! The saints of God are preserved from

the great tribulation, but the *influence* of these troubles makes them sin as it made Job sin in a certain way, and as no doubt, it caused the martyrs many a secret sin even though they were triumphant over death. As for this, I say they are cleansed from it by the blood of the Lamb, and so the actions of the enemy are defeated at every point.

Tribulation of any kind is pretty sure to make us feel the need of the precious blood, because it *brings sin to remembrance*. The widow of Sarepta said to the prophet, "Have you come to bring my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" Some sins never trouble the conscience until trials bring them up, and make the heart tender about them. Trouble, like a strong electric light, casts another color over the formerly dark scene, and we discover what we had forgotten; trials work a degree of tenderness of spirit, and so make sin conspicuous to the weeping eyes, and to the troubled heart. Many a man, when in great trouble about other matters, has begun to be in deep distress on account of sin, and oh, dear friend, if you are passing through any portion of the great tribulation and its effect upon you is to make your old sins come up before you, I pray you fly to the blood of Christ! That is the only way by which your faith can keep her hold; you can only believe in a sin-pardoning God by going to the cleansing fountain—for when sin is vividly seen, pardon is known to be impossible except through the divine atonement.

Tribulation has a *tendency to create even in good men, new sins*—sins into which they have never fallen before! "Brother," you say, "I shall never grieve against God." How do you know that? You say, "I have never done so unto this hour." I answer, why should you have done so? Has not the Lord set a hedge about you and all that you have—why should you murmur? Are not your wife and children about you? Are you not in health and strength? Why, then, should you grieve? There is small credit in being satisfied when you have all that you need! But suppose the Lord were to strip you of all these things? O man, I fear you might murmur as others have done before you, and the sin of rebellion to which you have been a stranger might yet triumph over you! Are you better than others? Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall! You will need to wash your robes even as others have done.

In some men, tribulation works a very fierce temptation to distrust. Ah, we think we have a deal of faith until we need it, and then when the time comes, we who have taught faith to others find that we have very little ourselves! Ah, how unbelief will insinuate itself, and dare us to drive it out! Sharper and blacker doubts than we dare speak of will come, such as, "Is there providence? Is there a God?" Ah, we must fly to the blood, or else this tribulation will drive us into atheistic questions, and cover us with horrible sins which will dishonor God and wound ourselves!

Tribulation, too, has an amazing tendency to stir up all our old sins. While things go well with us, that cage of unclean birds will hardly peep or chatter, but affliction comes and stirs them all up, and how horribly they hoot and call to each other! Ah, my perfect brother, you do not know what a host of devils nestle inside your bosom! Whenever I hear a brother talk of ceasing from conflict, I think how quiet the devils in his soul are—and how they are chuckling at his folly! Sins swarm most where pride swears that there are none! There is an ocean of sin within the heart of any one of us, and it only needs a trouble to stir the polluted mass, and we shall see what it is like. Just put you, who are so very good in your own esteem, into certain positions, and your mighty fine holiness will crack and blister like so much varnish in the sun! There lies lurking in the soul even of the most sanctified believer, before he gets to heaven, enough of sin to set the world on fire, and it only needs a fierce breach of strong temptation to set the embers, which seemed as if they were all quenched, blazing away like Nebuchadnezzar's furnace! The fire of sin would soon burn our souls to destruction if Christ did not interfere! See, then, my brothers and sisters, we must hasten away to the blood of atonement. You see how the two things are mentioned together—the tribulation and the blood-washing—and they must go *together* or else there will be no white robe for us at last, no character which will stand the gaze of the thrice holy Lord. The product of tribulation, by itself, will not be a white robe, but washing in the blood will give us that honorable array. Let us continually seek to have the atoning blood applied to cleanse our souls from the stains which tribulation is sure to make.

So, too, beloved brethren, *great trials are wonderfully apt to reveal the weakness of our graces and the number of our infirmities.* It is sure to make the believer see what an unbeliever he is! It will make the man who is full of love see how little he loves! It will show the child of patience how impatient he is, and will make the strong learn his weakness, and wise men learn their folly! Ah, captain, you are a

wise mariner, so you think, and so you are in a moderate squall, or in even an ordinary storm; but if the Lord were to let loose all His winds against you, I tell you what you would do—you would reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunk man, and be at your wits' end. Think of that! Those who have never done business in deep waters do not understand this. Your pleasure yachts which run between the islands, up the rivers, and in and out of the creeks know nothing about storms! Their crews are quite able to handle a vessel, so they say, but Atlantic storms would soon take the conceit out of them! Believe me, when a whirlwind takes the ship, and twists her round; and plays with her as with a toy; seafaring becomes no amusement! When the boat mounts to heaven, and then goes down into the abyss, it melts the soul because of heaviness, and forces a man to cry out for mercy! *Spiritual* storms make a man discover how utter weak he is, and then he is wise to fly to the blood of the Lamb! Oh, what a sweet restorative is found in the atoning Sacrifice! God in Christ Jesus reconciled to me by the blood once shed for many is my great joy! How the soul seems to get rid of all the mischief which tribulation otherwise would breed in her, when she bathes in that sacred fountain! Then, indeed, she puts on her white robes and chants a victorious song!

III. Now, thirdly, WHAT LESSON COMES OUT OF THIS? What is the teaching of the passage? The teaching is this, beloved, that when we are in tribulation, *then* is the time to have the most diligent dealings with the precious blood of the Lamb!

I would say to you, first, *meditate on it!* A sight of Christ in *His agony* is a wondrous cure for *our agonies*. That crown of thorns about Your head, O my Master, this shall ease my throbbing brow! Those eyes so red with weeping shall look consolation into my soul! Your cheeks, stained with spit, shall make me forget the reproach I bear for Your sake. When I see You, Yourself, stripped naked and hung up on the cross, the sight will make me think highly of being slandered and persecuted for Your sake! What are our griefs compared to His? On the table of sorrow they place the little drinking cups for us little children. But for our great elder brother, what a flagon did they set for Him! Yet He drank it, saying, “Not as I will, but as You will.” When we see the elder brother drinking of the same cup as ourselves, it makes us cheerfully put ours to our lips, and pledge Him in fellowship, “O Lord Jesus, shall we refuse what You take! No, glorious brother of our souls, we will be true brothers—we will prove our fellowship in this sad communion, and drink with You of Your cup, and be baptized with Your baptism.” So, you see, meditation on the blood of Jesus helps us in our tribulation by letting us see how much greater His woe was than ours is!

Another sweet consolation growing out of our subject is this—we see how great His love is to us. Perhaps He has seen fit to smite us, and we think Him angry; but we know He loves us because we see Him bleed. If you will only follow Christ through Gethsemane, and watch Him for a while on Calvary, and watching with Him for one hour, begin to taste His sufferings, we will say, “My Master, oh, how You love me! I perceive that Yours is a love which many waters cannot quench, which death itself cannot drown! Then if You love me so, You love me even in this, my affliction, and I will rejoice in it! I cannot doubt Your love, for Your blood seals the truth of it, and therefore I am confident under Your chastening hand.”

Meditation also comforts us when we follow another line of reflection, and say within ourselves—Jesus triumphed—and how? By suffering! The victories of Christ were not obtained by crushing others, but by being crushed Himself! His way to the throne was downward through the grave! He shows us the power of weakness, and the sublimity of suffering ridicule. Though here rejected, despised, and made nothing of, He is now exalted above all principalities and powers! “Well, then,” the heart argues, “so shall I be honored and glorified by suffering! If I endure patiently, and hold on my way, still flying to the precious blood, I shall in my weakness find my strength! In my sense of sinfulness I shall find purity in Christ and in death shall find my everlasting life!” So, you see, there is really something in meditating upon the blood of the Lamb!

But, beloved, the chief thing is this; in all times of tribulation the great matter is to have the blood of Christ *actually applied to the soul*. If you lie soaking in the atonement; if you put your broken heart to sleep on the breast of Christ, hard by His wounds, you will get peace by this method better than by any other. “How so?” one asks. Why, if the blood is applied to the conscience, it will breathe such peace through the soul, such sweet peace, that nothing else will be able to disturb you! I have known in hospi-

tals where there have been foul gases and ill smells that have burned choice herbs, and odoriferous plants, and sweet perfumes have been used to kill the noxious odors. Oh for a little of Christ's blood sprinkled in the chambers of the soul! It is better than frankincense or calamus! It will make death sweet, and cause the chamber of affliction to smell deliciously with Christ's precious name! If sin is pardoned, I am secure! If Christ stands in my place and His precious blood pleads for me, I am content to lie down at His feet, and say, "Do what You will, now You have pardoned me! Do what You will, Lord, for I am forgiven!" Such is the peace-giving power of the blood!

When the blood is applied to the soul, there is another gracious result—it takes the sting out of affliction by making us know that there is nothing *penal* in it. If Christ was punished in my place for my sin, then I can never be punished for my sin and therefore whatever I may have to endure daily by way of trial or suffering, there is no punishment in it! There may be my Father's loving and wise *chastisement*, and doubtless there is, but there is never a *punishment* such as a judge inflicts as a penalty for transgression! God brings no charge against His people—how can He? It is He that justifies them—and as He has no charge to bring, certainly He never punishes! Who is he that condemns since Christ has died? Are we not strengthened to bear the tribulation when we know that it does not come upon us as a punishment for sin? Our Father's providence has no wrath in it, or, if it has wrath at all, it is that "little wrath" we read of in Isaiah—"In a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you."

And, oh, brothers and sisters, if the blood of Christ is applied to the soul (and let us ask that it may, whether we are in great tribulation or not), we are assured that the end will be glorious! We are all in the great tribulation in one way or other—we are fighting and contending, and must do so to the end, but that end is guaranteed to us! The blood of Jesus Christ gives us a sweet assurance that it is all well with us, and shall be well with us forever! It opens the gates of heaven to us, and cries, "Courage! Courage! The battle is sharp, but it will soon be over, and there awaits for you a victor's crown." May not the soldier lift up his head and wipe his face from the sweat of battle, and say, "Then I will fight it through! Yes, in God's name, and by His grace, I will fight it through! What? Though this wound seems to have stunned me for a moment, and almost split my skull, I will fight it through if such is the promise and the reward! I will stir my soul, and the Holy Spirit shall awake it, to put on a noble daring, and on I will go to win for Christ! Well may I bear His cross since He prepares my crown." That is the sweet effect of the blood, and I ask that everyone here of us, tried or not, may feel it now to the praise and glory of His grace! O divine Spirit, grant us this grace!

What do *you* do, I wonder, who have not the blood of Christ to flee to? Ah, what do you do in time of sorrow who have no Christ to help you? I will ask you that question, and leave it to ring through your souls! Remember, when you feel you need Him, my Lord is ready, for the fountain is still opened for sin and for uncleanness! You have but to wash and be clean! A simple faith will obtain complete purification from all sin. God grant you may believe in Jesus at once. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—REVELATION 7.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—872, 877, 818.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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